T-117

Dear Dave:

Reply to your last letter:

(1.) I see no reason to believe that I exaggerate either my own failings or those of others — when I speak of them in factual terms. It's true that I am more ready than most people to apply strongly negative value-judgements to the failings I see in others (not to my own failings — I admit to being biassed in my own favor, and I don't even regard that as a failing! I indulge in a naughty grin as I write this.) Of course I may exaggerate the failings of people for purely mechanical reasons, so to speak: Most statements about people require qualifications, but commonly it is just too much trouble to state all the qualifications, so that a criticism is apt to come out too unqualified. If you have any specific cases to discuss in which you think I've exaggerated people's failings, I'm quite ready to discuss them.

(2.) On p. 2 of your letter, where you talk about my "vision of the world", you seem to mix this up with the habit of precise and careful thinking, as if precise and careful thinking implied some particular view of the world. But it doesn't. I would rather compare analytical thinking to a magnifying glass which enables one to see certain things more clearly. It does not imply any particular ~~see~~ reaction or attitude toward what you see. Of course, what you see is likely to affect you in some way or another, but your reaction is your own affair and is not implied by the use of the magnifying glass in itself. Naturally, some people will prefer not to look through the magnifying glass because they find it more comfortable to remain ignorant of some of the things they might see through it.

(3.) What you ~~[illegible]~~ wrote next seems to be just a fancy way of saying that you often participated in activities with me primarily for a sense of closeness, companionship, or communion, whereas I participated primarily for the activity itself rather than for any sense of communion, which didn't particularly interest me. This is quite true. To you a sense of closeness or communion with other people

60314022 D ui
K519
FBI
LABORATORY

pedazo muy pequeño esté cortado fuera de una manzana. ¿ Tenemos entonces cuatro manzanas o 3.99 manzanas? ¿Qué diremos acerca de las moléculas que se le quiten a la manzana cuando la toquemos con los dedos? ¿ Cuánto tiene que quitarse a la manzana para que quede menos de una manzana entera?

Esto indica que tenemos que dirigirnos al problema: ¿ Qué es una manzana ... una manzana entera y sin nada agregada? Y en seguida nos damos cuenta de que no se puede demostrar nada por medio de razonamientos sobre manzanas ni otros objetos físicos, porque todo objeto físico tiene menudos defectos; ningúno está perfecto. Por consecuencia no es posible determinar cuándo tenemos exactamente cuatro manzanas. Y en cuanto a los partículos subatómicos: Se supone que estos ~~son~~ sean perfectos, pero si decimos: -- Tenemos aquí dos partículos y allí otros dos; pongámoslos juntos -- jugamos con una absurda ficción, porque en verdad no podemos hacerlo. Los partículos subatómicos vuelen de una parte a otra con suma rapidez; se convierten los unos en otros instantaneamente; y luego se convierten en aún otros. Podemos detenerlos para contarlos? La idea es ingenua.

T-117
(3) Page to be translated

seems to be important, whereas I am more psychologically self-sufficient and, so to speak, self-contained. It is also true, as you seemed to suggest, that you have a generous personality whereas I am more egotistical and selfish. ②

③ You wrote: "You said I propose to know things by ~~[illegible]~~ 'feeling them deep down inside'." I am rather irritated by this, because if you will take the trouble to re-read my letter you will see that I said no such thing. On the contrary, ~~[illegible]~~ I said twice that you feel "deep down inside" certain things that you refused to admit to yourself consciously. You presumably had my letter still in your possession when you wrote, so there is no excuse for misquoting me so badly.

60314022 D ul
K519
FBI LABORATORY

③

④ In the rest of your letter there are some scattered points that I might care to argue with; but rather than dealing with them all I will simply say that the general impression is this: You seem to be saying, though not very explicitly, that there are certain truths (and not merely truths about your own emotions) that are accessible to you by what you call your "way of thinking" and not accessible to those who think differently. As usual, you give no indication of what these truths are, no analysis of how your "way of ~~thinking~~ thinking" arrives at them, no evidence of any kind to support the existence of these truths. The very fact that I ask for some explanation, analysis, or evidence for these truths you will probably take as a demonstration that I am hide-bound by a "rigid" "scientific" mentality. In short, all you have to offer is the blank assertion that you have access to some kind of truths, and any attempt to dig deeper or to criticize this mode of thinking is dismissed as "scientific".

All this reminds me of catholicism. If I am not mistaken, Catholic doctrine makes no claim that the existence of god can be proven. They just ~~claim~~ claim to know it on the basis of "faith". Anything in the world that seems inconsistent with the existence of a good and omnipotent ~~god~~ god is explained away on the basis that god

60314022 D U1
K519
FBI
LABORATORY

is "inscrutable" — mere mortals (or at ④
least non-catholic mortals) don't understand him; and so forth. And how can you argue with them? When somebody answers all your arguments with the mere assertion that you "don't understand" and that they know things on the basis of "faith," what is there to argue against? Of course there is no way to prove conclusively that the catholics are wrong, but it's pretty clear what is going on: They want to believe a certain thing very badly, but unfortunately the evidence points in the opposite direction, so they dodge the question by standing on "faith".

I fail to see that you have anything more to offer than the Catholics, except that for "faith" you substitute "your" way of thinking". In my former letter I've already made some comments on your (not necessarily conscious) motives.

I note, by the way, that you have not denied any of the statements about your motivations that I made. Rather typically you have sidestepped the issues and resorted to vague generalities which do not directly confront the points I made. But I suppose you will claim that it would be too "rigid" and "scientific" to expect you to confront the issues directly.

As a matter of fact, I am not much interested in discussing further with

60314022 D 41
K519
FBI
LABORATORY

you these philosophical questions, because by this time I am (5) fairly confident that your psychological need for your self-deceptions is so strong that no amount of reasoning will ever get you away from them. Whatever kind of reasonings might be presented to you attacking your position, probably you will dismiss them as "rigid" or "scientific" or by applying some other empty label to them, and you will claim they are based on misunderstanding of your "way of thinking", the validity of which apparently has to be accepted on faith.

(5) In my last letter I just wanted to make that point about your motivations because in previous discussions we've had I was just itching to say it. Now I've got it off my chest. Also I have some other points to make about your psychology, and I may take up that subject in the future, especially since (unlike the philosophical issues) this is a topic whose potential for discussion we have not yet exhausted.

(6) I don't see any validity in your assertion that I hold to a "rigid, objectifying system" in order to "preserve [my] world against the contributions of other consciousnesses." In the first place, I fail to see how what you mis-call my "system" preserves me against "contributions of other consciousnesses". Actually, careful disciplined thinking involving a constant and often uncomfortable readiness to question and criticize my own conclusions and root out my own self-deceptions, has in various instances obliged me to accept conclusions that I found unpleasant; including conclusions coming from people whom I disliked. So, if by "contributions" of other consciousnesses you mean ideas or conclusions, then my so-called "system", far from "preserving my world", has compelled me to accept others' conclusions, including some unpleasant ones. On the other hand, if by "contributions of other consciousnesses" you mean a sense of closeness or communion, it is quite true that beyond a certain point I resist that — but that has nothing to do with disciplined thinking. I find it quite easy to accept someone's ideas or conclusions, if they seem sound, without liking or having any sense of communion with the person. Perhaps you'll claim that my "system" as you mis-call it is a way of avoiding accepting others' ideas uncritically and without reference to any

60314022 D 41
K519
FBI
LABORATORY

prior criteria, but such a claim would demonstrate a gross misunderstanding of my psychology. My personality is such (if you like, you can say I am so egotistical) that if I thought uncritically, spontaneously, and without self-discipline, I would automatically reject everyone else's ideas and accept only my own. So, as I said, disciplined thinking not infrequently forces me to accept ideas I'd otherwise reject, and it makes no sense to describe it as a defense against others' "contributions".

⑦ One final point. You said my letter had a "strong effect on [you], in the emotional sense", and that it "partially disrupted [your] complacency". This illustrates the fact that you are not in the habit of re-examining your thinking critically, looking for flaws and oversights, and attempting to root out your self-deceptions. If you had been in that habit my letter would not have shaken you; you would have been accustomed to the idea that you might have self-deceptions in your thinking, and the points I made would have been far from entirely new to you; but perhaps you think it would be too "rigid" and "scientific" to critically re-examine your thinking, your motivations, and your possible self-deceptions.

As for other matters: I'm glad to hear your team is doing well — or was doing well when you wrote the letter. Is it still doing well?

I hear you're going to spend the winter at your place in Texas. When you do I'd be very interested to hear about your experiences, anything about the wildlife, etc.

Ma told me when she was here that you wrote some kind of essay about music that won considerable praise. I congratulate you. Of course you know what my attitude would probably be if I read it — that its value lies largely in its emotive content and that much of it has no other content — but we need not get back on that subject.

As for me, my garden is looking good — potatoes, parsnips, "wild" carrots, sugar beets. I have more rhubarb than I can use,

60314022 D ui
K519
FBI
LABORATORY